



**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**

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**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Grand Forks, N.D./East Grand Forks, Minn. Flood Reduction Project

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### **Project Background**

In 1997, a catastrophic flood occurred in the communities of East Grand Forks, Minn., and Grand Forks, N.D. This caused extraordinary property damage, disruption of community infrastructure and public services and an evacuation and dislocation of citizens that was of historic proportions. The flooding and the mass evacuation that resulted from it, demonstrated there was a need for protection from the inundation of large magnitude floods. The objective of the implementation of flood reduction for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks is to provide protection from a flood of magnitude equal to that of the 1997 flood.

Grand Forks and East Grand Forks are located at the intersection of the Red River of the North and the Red Lake River in Grand Forks and Polk counties, respectively. They are approximately 90 miles south of the Canadian border and have a combined population of nearly 60,000. Since flood inundation during the spring of 1997, both communities have been working aggressively with the St. Paul District to develop a permanent, comprehensive flood damage reduction project incorporating recreation and aesthetic features.

### **Project Description**

The flood reduction project consists of building levees and floodwall, essentially creating three rings around both cities, to protect the communities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Additionally, it includes stabilizing an existing dam, removing a railroad bridge, closures for numerous roads, extending and expanding an existing diversion channel and constructing a new diversion channel. The design level of protection is equivalent to the peak discharge experienced during the 1997 flood in these cities.

The Corps completed a General Reevaluation Report and Environmental Impact Statement in 1999. Construction began during the summer of 2000 with stabilizing the banks of and building a fish passageway at Riverside Dam, as well as removing a bridge between the two cities that was damaged in 1997. The first phase of levee construction began in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks in the summer of 2001 and is essentially complete. The English Coulee Diversion, English Coulee Pump Station and 55th Street Pump Station on the Grand Forks side are also nearing completion. Construction began in the fall of 2002 on the Phase II levees for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, and these phases are about 75 percent complete. Construction on the Phase III levees for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks started in the spring of 2004, and the Heartsville Coulee Diversion in East Grand Forks will begin construction in September 2004. The Corps expects the project to be completed by the fall of 2006. The Phase IV levees for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks will be advertised in the fall of 2004 and will be completed by the fall of 2006.

The current working estimate for the flood damage reduction project stands at \$406 million. Project design and construction costs are being shared between federal and the two cities at 50 percent each. Operation and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the two cities.

### **Authority**

The project was authorized in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1999 (Public Law 105-277).